

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 184

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MONTH BY MONTH

AN EXTRA HALFPENNY.

Hundreds of Labour Party Secretaries and others are now rubbing their eyes to discover that an extra halfpenny affiliation fee was clapped on at the Edinburgh Conference. No mention of the matter appeared in the agenda issued for the Conference, and the alteration was absent from the list of amendments to the Constitution and Standing Orders proposed by the National Executive. The alleged object of the increase is to provide pensions for the Labour Party staff. That matter is referred to in our report of the Agents' Conference, from which it will be seen that the Party's proposal has met with ample criticism from that quarter. It will also be noted that, though the Party budget for a pension cost of £2,800 per year, the increased affiliation fee may raise getting on for double that amount. The Party decline to give an undertaking that the money raised for pensions will be solely devoted or earmarked for that end. So much for that!

THE WRONG PROCEDURE.

Many of our readers will be concerned about what seems an undemocratic and reprehensible method of introducing vital changes into Party rules. Affiliated organisations who desire to move resolutions or alter rules are compelled by Standing Orders to give several months' notice of their intention. These proposals are published and other organisations have the right to submit amendments, which in turn are published and submitted to the Movement. The National E.C. have discovered a shorter course to serve their own amendments, and it must be admitted that they have on previous occasions got away with it. The E.C. Report is made use of and alterations of rule are put forward as

a recommendation. The Report, if carried, is tantamount to acceptance of the alterations proposed. There is no rule or Standing Order which compels the National E.C. to submit alterations of rule to the affiliated organisations at any prescribed time prior to Conference. The result is that, as in this case, increased subscriptions may be imposed, or other vital alterations made, at only a few days' notice, without discussion in the Movement, and, as we submit in this case, entirely without the knowledge of the great bulk of it. We think the procedure is wrong. The next thing may be alteration or amendment by "Order in Council"!

SHALL WE PAY?

The new impost is not going to make work among Local Parties any easier. But we submit it will be ill for the Movement if the increased fee is not generally accepted and paid. The objections to the proposed pension scheme remain, and the Agents' Union can be trusted to continue to fight against a plan which gives pensions to a few favoured employees of the Movement and denies them to the most necessitous. But there are other considerations. It is over sixteen years since we advocated a minimum national affiliation fee of sixpence. The sum required to-day to accomplish all that is needed to make the Party really effective and to do its work in the constituencies, is not less than one shilling per member per annum. The Constituency Parties, already somewhat under the weather, will feel the increase most. But on the other hand, it is the Constituency Parties who will benefit most if they accept the doctrine of a high affiliation fee as inevitable and necessary for the Party's future triumph. The orthodox Trades Union attitude to this matter

Do ALL the officers
of your Party get
the "L.O."?

IF NOT - WHY NOT?

is simply hopeless. Is it generally realised that Trades Unions extract from 17s. 4d. to two or three pounds per annum per member, and foist the political Movement off with a paltry fourpence—now 4½d. The bald fact is enough to take one's breath away, and even making allowance for all that some Trades Unions do by way of direct subsidy to Divisional Labour Parties, the attitude of most Trades Unions to political Labour is grudging, miserable and paltry. On the other hand, constituency members have all sorts of sacrifices to make on top of their subscriptions. But let them make no mistake about their policy. If we plump for bigger affiliation fees, some of the Trades Unions will have to revise their ideas and their rules—to the great advantage of the Party and the enlightenment of their members.

BREAKERS AHEAD.

That there is a great deal of unrest in the constituencies has been manifest for a long time. It almost came to a head at Edinburgh. And something has now to be done about it, for the Constituency Parties are not without sympathisers even among Trades Union leaders. Our own sympathies are almost entirely with Constituency Parties in these matters, though we are not at all in agreement with some of the suggestions that have been made. We could wish that some of our friends had consulted us, or at least have ventilated their ideas in our columns before going forward. But apart from the questions of national leadership and national policy which have become mixed up with these matters, the central trouble with Con-

stituency Parties is lack of finance. No tinkering with the structure of the Party will help this problem much. What *will* affect it is the matter we have mentioned above, coupled with increased and *compulsory* local affiliation if national affiliation is to be effective. One wonders that the Local Parties have never sought to stipulate that T.U. representation at the Annual Conference should only be accorded on the basis of national and local affiliations. This reform is eighteen years overdue, and it should have been inserted in the constitution of 1918 when Constituency Parties first received recognition.

THE DEVIL'S PROPAGANDA.

May we be forgiven a paragraph of another kind? How soon is it going to be before certain people, frothing at the mouth, urge their younger confrères to a holy war against Fascism? We don't like the signs of the times. We, too, are anti-Fascist and anti to every kind of Dictatorship. But has everyone forgotten the Dictatorship that existed during the war? The defence of the Realm Act? The suppression of liberty, of freedom of speech and thought? The deportations? The imprisonments? The torturing of Conscientious Objectors? The starvation? The insufferable arrogance of khaki-clad nincompoops and belted officers? Have we forgotten, too, the revelations of the utter incapacity of men like Haig, and those who at that time all classes had to honour or suffer? Are the graves of Flanders not filled yet, and has there been nothing in all our teachings for the last twenty years that war solves nothing, force fails and only reason answers? We, at any rate, have not forgotten the campaign of hate that preceded 1914. The signs are the same. It was the Kaiser and the Prussians then—to-day it is Hitler and the Fascists. The artful and hideous propaganda goes on, enfolding in its tangles first this publicist then that leader or the other one. How long before it triumphs, as it will triumph, unless we resist the propaganda of hate and turn to understand and reason even with Fascism? We of this journal, at any rate, will not bow the knee to Baal, nor follow anybody to a blood bath. It is time everybody re-read Labour Party literature, 1918-1936.

MOSTLY FIGURES.

There are 615 Members of the British House of Commons, but there are not 615 constituencies. The total number of constituencies is 585 for Great Britain and 10 for Northern Ireland.

There are 230 County constituencies in England; 38 in Scotland and 24 in Wales and Monmouthshire. That is a total of 292 County constituencies returning 292 Members. There are no "double-barrelled" County constituencies.

There are 61 Parliamentary Boroughs in London (returning 62 Members); 183 Boroughs in England (excluding London) which return 193 Members. There are 32 Scotch Boroughs (returning 33 Members) and 11 Boroughs in Wales returning that number of Members.

There are in Great Britain six University seats returning 11 Members.

In Northern Ireland 13 Members are returned for 10 constituencies. One constituency, however, returning one Member is a University constituency.

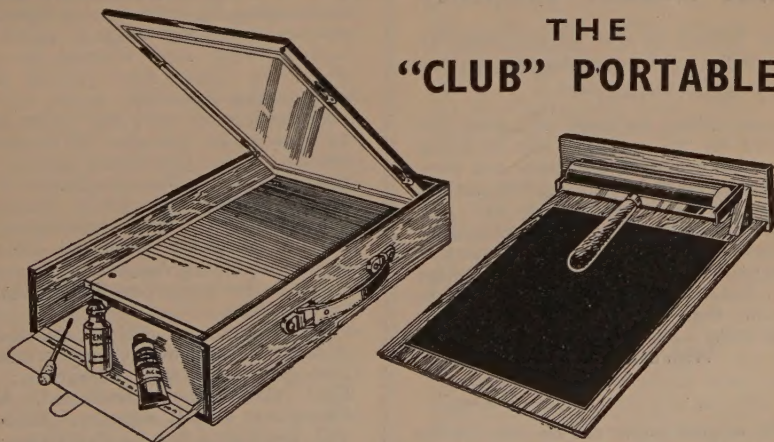
It is not always remembered that the number of constituencies which at present return Members to the House of Commons is *less* than as laid down by the Representation of the People Act, 1918. The number of constituencies provided for in 1918 was 707.

The explanation, of course, arises out of the exclusion of the Irish Free State since the passing of the 1918 Act.

There is another minor amendment to the list of constituencies contained in the 1918 Act. The University of Reading now partakes in the election of two Members along with the Universities of Durham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham and Bristol.

In view of renewed talk of redistribu-

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tion, it is interesting to recall that the standard unit of population which was taken as a guide at the last redistribution was 70,000. This rule, however, was elastic. Boroughs of 50,000 inhabitants were not to lose their separate representation. There were some exceptions to this rule, and the Speaker's Commission also took into account electorates and other considerations.

There are 83 Borough Councils in England and Wales, and 62 County Councils, including London. Scotland has 33 County Councils.

The non-County Borough Councils in England and Wales number 282. There are 29 Metropolitan Borough Councils.

Urban District Councils in England and Wales number 667. There are 492 Rural District Councils.

That Labour Monthly

The Editor of one of our regular monthlies, on resigning his voluntary post, writes:—

"I am writing to thank you most sincerely for the splendid way in which you have produced the paper, and done all you could to help during the past few years. If ever I move from here and have anything to do with starting another Labour Monthly, I shall certainly see that it is printed at Ripley, if you can manage it. But I am hoping to stay here and to watch the 'Labour News' grow into quite a big fellow.

With every good wish,
Yours sincerely, _____."

(The original letter can be seen by the Editor of the L.O. or any enquirer.)

The foregoing was received in February by

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LET US QUOTE YOU

Labour Agents' Conference

The Annual Conference of the National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents was held at Edinburgh on Sunday, 4th October.

There was a good attendance of members and a keen interest in the proceedings. The Union Executive's report was shorter this year than usual, although it covered a number of important questions. The main interest centred in a special report on the Union's endeavours to secure an all-in pensions scheme for Labour Agents and the Labour Party staff.

The proposals of the Labour Party, with which our readers are doubtless familiar, drew serious and considerable criticism from the Union Executive. Objection was taken to the non-inclusion of Agents, to the grounds on which this refusal was based, and to the Party's proposals for a narrowed scheme applicable only to its own direct employees.

The scheme itself was also subject to a merciless criticism, and several serious defects were shown up. In the end, a strong resolution was passed condemning the exclusion of Constituency Agents, and calling upon the Labour Party staff affected by the scheme to refrain from joining same until vitally amended.

Discussion on ordinary Union business was much curtailed by the above matters. The Conference passed the report of the *Labour Organiser* without discussion, and also a resolution which demanded the restoration of the cuts in the Party grants to constituencies employing Agents. This matter is to be the subject of representations to the Party.

The election of officers resulted as follows:—President: Coun. W. Barefoot, J.P., re-elected. Chairman: Mr. Fred Constantine, re-elected. Vice-Chairman: Mr. R. Stanton. Secretary and Treasurer: Mr. H. Drinkwater, re-elected. Auditors: Messrs. R. Montford, J.P., and C. C. Jones, re-elected.

An interesting item of the day's proceedings was a kind remembrance from the Conference to ex-Labour Agents now living in retirement. Good wishes were sent to Mr. Ben Shaw (Glasgow), Mr. Sam Hague (late Gorton and Bilton), Mr. F. H. Edwards (late London), Ald. R. Raynes, J.P. (Derby), Mr. E. Gibbin (Newcastle), Ald. I. Crabtree, J.P. (Oldham), Mr. W. Speakman (Newton-le-Willows), and others.

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ITEMS

Two further informative circulars have been issued since our last issue by the Labour Party's Local Government Department. One points to the need of revision of the Standing Orders of many Local Governing Bodies, and gives information regarding Model Standing Orders, and the other circular deals with Local Governing Authorities and Rent Control.

The next few months are important ones in the calendar of local elections. The Municipal Elections are, of course, always with us on November 1st, but next March the triennial County Council and Parish Council Elections take place in addition to the annual elections in April for Urban and District Councils.

The above facts are emphasised in a circular just issued by the Labour Party. The circular is accompanied by some printed hints on the conduct of local elections. It is unfortunate that by the nature of things such circulars cannot be read or digested in full at Party meetings. Indeed, they are sometimes not even mentioned there. The hints, however, are of such utility that we shall reprint same in our columns. We regret that we are unable to do this this month, and that therefore, so far as Borough Council elections are concerned, information given previously in the "Labour Organiser" must act as a guide.

The London Labour Party, which has been for some months preparing in earnest for the great L.C.C. effort that will be made next March, have recently published two attractive and unusual electioneering leaflets. The claim is that Labour is making a better London, and the leaflets set out to prove it. Distributing leaflets is one thing; but the prior task is to so draft them that they will be read. These two leaflets *will* be read.

The Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party have come into line with a few other leading Parties in the country by supplying a useful series of speakers' notes for use in the coming Municipal Elections. After all, the time for stunt electioneering has gone by. Electors to-day demand facts and sound arguments. It is the business of Parties and Organisers to see that these are supplied and that speakers are well armed. Liverpool is to be congratulated.

Mr. Maurice Webb, the "Daily Herald" Labour Movement's Relation Officer, is, we presume, responsible for the editorship of a bright little fly-sheet, known as the "Labour Bulletin." No. 1 has some useful tips and hints and information. If succeeding issues keep up this standard the "Bulletin" will prove a welcome visitor. We take the next paragraph from "Hints and Ideas" which appear in its columns.

"Have you tried selling pamphlets door to door? You may think it can't be done. Actually, where it has been tried it has been a huge success. People will buy our literature if you take it to them. Send out a circular first, then visit selected districts in groups. Never have more than two different pamphlets for sale—and choose those which have some relation to the people you are canvassing."

In the daily press we read the other day that the Brownhills and District Hospital Carnival Committee did not trust the weather this year, which was lucky for them. On Carnival day it poured with rain all day, the result being a claim on Lloyds, and a handsome profit instead of a loss. Though we have advised on this score in two previous issues of the "Labour Organiser," we could wish that it was a Labour event above referred to. We

(Please turn to page 189, foot of column 2)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

"Local Government Speaker's Handbook," 1936/37 edition. Price sixpence. The Labour Party.

The "Local Government Speaker's Handbook" is one of the most welcome and efficient publications of the Labour Party. It makes a timely appearance in a revised edition and attractive cover this month. Its 66 pages are compact of information. Local Government candidates in particular will find the handbook helpful. Audiences to-day are no longer influenced by mere eloquence or wind. The people want facts, and here they are, of just the character, and in just the form, for Labour use.

"Unemployment Assistance Guide."

By G. Grant McKenzie. Price sixpence. The Labour Party.

Among our many shortcomings may we confess to our readers that we have always had a supreme ignorance regarding unemployment assistance regulations. And in reading this pamphlet one is appalled by the volume and detail of the stuff one ought to have had greater familiarity with. This pamphlet is the sure guide which thousands of advisers and Trade Union practitioners need in their pockets. We should imagine that no one can claim mastery of the new regulations without frequent reference to the sort of details that are here supplied. But a word of warning! Have we not met some Labour folk who have become so involved in the administration of the pills and potions of capitalism as almost to forget the clear challenge of Socialism to all the rigmarole, class distinction and division which "unemployment assistance" implies? A mere glance at the regulations sharpens up our revolutionary beliefs.

"Nutrition and Food Supplies." Price 2d. The Labour Party.

This is a sister pamphlet to "Protect the Nation's Mothers," and is a reprint of a report which was presented to the National Conference of Labour Women. It seems hard that the case for sufficient food for human beings, especially children, must be argued by the presentation of so

so much fact and detail. It hurts us to see the picture on the cover. What damnable madness possesses the nation (and even entangles some Labour folk) that there should be such suffering and starvation, and at the same time such lavish expenditure on "defence"? As if the holocaust of the little sufferers was not enough.

"The Demand for Colonial Territories and Equality of Economic Opportunity." Price 4d. The Labour Party.

The laboriousness of the above title is a fair indication of the contents and method. Political subjects possess their fashions and their seasons. Yesteryear we were all agog over finance. The financial experts have taken a back seat. Make way for those who speak with more or less authority on what, after all, will be the big world issue in the immediate years ahead. This pamphlet should be read with that last thought in mind. But it is not the last word that the Labour Party will have to say, or even be compelled by circumstances to say, upon this subject. And we think that some of the conclusions won't stand up to the pace at which events are flying.

"The Draft Constitution of the Soviet Union." Price 2d. net. Committee of the Congress of Peace and Friendship with the U.S.S.R.

One wonders who are the "Committee of the Congress of Peace and Friendship," and one wonders other things. Good luck to everybody genuinely out for Peace and Friendship—but we want it all round. We take it that this pamphlet is authoritative; certainly it is interesting and vindictive. There are forewords by Sidney Webb, Laski, Norman Angell, Hicks, Pritt and Gilbert Murray. And at twopence it should be bought by the many for reference. The Committee of the Congress unfortunately omit any address on the pamphlet.

"The Moscow Trial, 1936." Price 3d. Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee.

The effrontery, or should we say the mentality, which has produced this pamphlet is hard to understand.

The title alone reminds one of another trial which did not quite conform to British standards. And then comes this, a needless reminder of the sickening spectacle of men confessing conspiracy to murder and asking for the penalty, i.e., to be shot. Our British make-up does not understand. The awful verdict which D. N. Pritt, who writes a preface, approves—"all to the supreme penalty to be shot, and all property personally belonging to them to be confiscated"—just appals us. Are those bloody mornings and falling corpses really necessary as bulwarks to our liberty and to workers' emancipation? Just so with reprisals in Spain. If the answer be Yes, then verily the tree we have sought to cultivate yields Dead Sea fruit. But we believe there is a different answer, and we have read these creeping pages only to be convinced what horror follows horror, and how fundamental is the error that force fulfils the workers' needs.

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NOBODY SAYS THANKS!

A year or two ago Miss Monica Whateley wrote in our columns and raised the question of the manners of our Movement. We have been reminded of this matter by a recent comment of a car owner that, though he had lent his car on every election for many years past, often unasked, and at a considerable aggregate cost, he had never yet received a line of thanks, nor on any occasion even the personal thanks of the candidate whom he had helped.

Well, we are not surprised, though we should like to see an alteration. Labour people are often, we will not say ill-mannered, but certainly very thoughtless.

Not only is there a complaint from car owners, but speakers have the same criticism to make. We have known of speakers who have travelled long distances in cold discomfort only to find that not only was there no word

of welcome, but no preparation or comfort arranged; even their services were almost despised, they were left unthanked, and naturally unpaid, or even asked if there were any expenses. "Comrades" can be insufferable sometimes, and we appeal to sober members of our Party to do something to remove reproaches of this kind.

Car owners in particular have a grouse. They are appealed to at every election, often by the very people who abuse them all the year round, and on behalf of candidates who, mayhap, have sat upon the very Bench which fined them. Old beliefs die hard, and every car owner is profoundly believed by the Labour Movement to be either a Rockefeller or a Lord Nuffield. Cars, of course, run on air, the petrol (taxed at 8d. per gallon) is dispensed free at the pumps. There are no taxes, insurance or licences, or fines to pay.

We have, too, the ignoramus who firmly believes that one more passenger in a car makes no difference. One supposes one can go on adding weight *ad infinitum*. There are those who coolly ask a motorist to "run" them here and "run" them there, and make no bones about using the other fellow's car, licence and expenses, to save them the price of a bus fare. These criticisms are not confined to Labour folk, but they do apply to a good many of them.

Perhaps in view of the above some of our friends and comrades will mend their ways. If they do not, car owners have a simple remedy. We ourselves adopted it years ago!

A LOUD-SPEAKER TIP

One of the most ingenious Agents has found a solution to a problem which has often faced us—how to get the loud-speaker to a meeting or series of meetings when no car is available.

He purchased a tradesman's box tricycle and, by the judicious boring of a few holes for leads and flex, has fitted up a neat and easily transportable amplifying equipment of the greatest possible value for either a works gate meeting or a big demonstration. I have not seen this handy device and if our colleague will send a photo of it to the Editor I am sure he would be glad to reproduce it in these columns.

BIG ELECTORATES AND LITTLE ONES

By JACK CUTTER

AND CONFERENCE COMMENTS

Last month I wrote about the gigantic electorates and the hints we hear about redistribution, promising to go more carefully into details this month and asking for your observations.

As a result of your help and of a little research, it must frankly be confessed that the problem is not so acute as it seemed at first, inasmuch as the number of constituencies with astronomical electorates is comparatively small—so small, indeed, as to render unnecessary a general reshuffle all over the country and pointing to the easy solution of a division of the several largest constituencies and leaving the rest well alone.

The Goliaths—

There are eight single-membered constituencies with electorates over 100,000 (on the 1935 Register). They are:—

Romford	...	167,939
Hendon	...	164,802
Harrow	...	130,716
Ilford	...	106,936
Dartford	...	106,844
Moseley	...	101,169
Blackpool	...	100,529
Altrincham	...	100,341

It will be noted that all these except one (Romford) are Tory seats and that five of them are dormitory constituencies of Greater London.

There are also eight two-membered constituencies over the 100,000 mark, Brighton, Bolton, Southampton and Sunderland in England, Dundee in Scotland and three in Northern Ireland.

—And the Davids.

Turning to the smallest electorates we find that 21 constituencies are below 33,000. Only five of them are Labour in this Parliament. Four are Opposition Liberal, seven are Tory and five Liberal National.

Eight of the 21 are geographically huge constituencies in Scotland which it would be impractical to enlarge. Indeed, as 16 of the 21 are county divisions, the widening of boundaries would be a very unsatisfactory way of dealing with redistribution.

It would seem the common-sense thing to abolish the double-barrelled constituencies and divide the mighty ones, providing that divisions are natural and obvious ones and not tortuous fretworking to suit the purposes of any political party.

A.G.M. Below Par.

The 1936 Annual Conference of the Labour Agents' Union proved that we are not at our best when discussing our own financial relations with the Party, and, as the bulk of the meeting was devoted to matters relating to Pensions, the Conference was not up to standard by a long way.

I think it can safely be said that none of us are in our jobs for what we can get out of them financially. We have so much to do with the monetary problems of our Movement that we are naturally uncomfortable and ill at ease in discussing the £ s. d. of our own personal positions. We would prefer that the consciences of the organisations which employ us should provide some sort of security for us and remove Constituency Agency from the list of precarious and blind-alley occupations rather than be forced to conduct an agitation towards that end.

Hence it is not to be wondered at that the major debate was not of a very high character. I confess that, for my own part, it spoiled a meeting which I have always looked forward to with keen pleasure as an annual reunion of colleagues and comrades.

Conference Date.

As the Irishman said, I "noticed many absent faces," mainly those of our London colleagues who, faced with the needle contests in the Metropolitan Borough Council elections, could not leave their constituencies even for a week-end only three short weeks before polling in contests which have extra significance this year in view of the all-important L.C.C. poll of the same electorate in March.

Of all the many objections to our present Conference date, its proximity

to the November elections is the most urgent. Annual Conference of the Party had not time to discuss an amendment to the Constitution proposed by the N.E.C. that Conference be held in future at Whitsuntide, and we are therefore condemned to another October Conference. We can do a great deal to make sure that the Whitsun amendment goes through next time.

MUTTS ON THE MIKE.

A correspondent writes: I have found that a lot of Labour speakers simply do not know how to use the Mike. What is wanted is clear and slow diction. Some speakers try to belittle the loud-speaker work when the real trouble is their own lack of endeavour to master the few simple rules governing the use of the Mike. The hammering and jabbering effect which some speakers produce is a hindrance and not a help in propaganda. This can all be avoided with a little care.

Speakers and others who forget the nearness of the Mike often cause a round of merriment. Who were the two well-known Labour people who, during the Erdington by-election, stopped one afternoon for a quiet confab in a lonely grove? The car ahead was treated to quite one or two confidences, and then followed an invitation from one speaker to the other to "have an apple." The munching and scrunching which followed, magnified by the Mike, sounded much like a herd of cows busy on the preliminaries for making milk.

Owners of battery-operated loud-speaker sets will persist in the error of running on one L.T. accumulator only, only to let the speaker and everybody down when the battery runs out. It is easy to avoid this by keeping a second battery always fully charged. Beware, too, of the careless person who will fail to switch off when the Mike is not in use, so discharging both high and low tensions. The care of a loud-speaker set demands the exercise of some common-sense, which is just why certain people always decline to lend out their instruments.

By-the-way, the Labour Party remind Labour Parties of the arrangement

made by the Party with the Performing Rights Society whereby Local Parties are able to use gramophone records in conjunction with their loud-speakers for the special annual fee of £1 1s. 0d. Not everyone realises the extent which songs and recording is copyright, and Parties who recklessly utilise records without arrangement with the Society named are apt to land themselves into trouble. The subscription covers a period of from September 5th of one year to September 4th of the next year. There is no point therefore in delaying sending the subscription, especially as many Parties would like to use their amplifiers indoors during the winter months.

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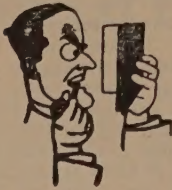
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(Concluded from page 185)

have heard such a lot of moanings about the weather this year—spoilt events and lost resources, etc.—that we wonder whether insurance ever will be taken seriously. Would it not have been nice if some Parties had insured against a wet day on November 14th, 1935? It might have slightly consoled us for our loss of victory.



QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

Single Canvass Card System

Question. Our Party has recently been considering buying canvass cards and using them in future elections. At present we canvass from the register. I find, however, that there are two or three sorts of canvass cards. Can you please tell me what is the best system?

Answer. As our friend has discovered, there are several types of canvass cards, and there are also two or three methods of canvassing from the register. Our friend presumably means that at present canvassers take the register with them from door to door when canvassing. This is pretty crude. A much commoner thing is to paste the register on to suitably sized pasteboards, sometimes taking the register just as it is (particularly where it is alphabetical), and sometimes pasting up the streets or blocks separately.

A third method is to use specially prepared books for pasting the register. Some books for this purpose were advertised in the *Labour Organiser* in October last year.

Labour's canvassing methods, after years of instruction, still remain very crude. Canvassing is not popular, and although the opposition to it is on the wane, Labour is still content with elementary methods, and in the main has never mastered the art of canvassing. Actually in October, 1920, the *Labour Organiser* printed an article on canvassing up-to-date, and on how to make the best use of Labour's own material. The Party is a long way from adopting the advice tendered 16 years ago.

Canvassing from the register in any form is a crude method. The closely printed pages of the register afford no proper space for information, and the markings are apt to be confused.

It is impossible to segregate the Fors and Against, the back calls and the removals, and all this work must be the subject of separate writings-up. Generally such matters are overlooked and a canvass from the register is a scamped canvass.

Those places with an alphabetic register have the biggest problem at election times. If pasted registers are used, the only thing to do is to paste the whole section of a register and for one canvasser to have the lot.

For alphabetic registers in particular, and also, we urge, for every type of electorate, the single canvass card system is the best, cheapest and simplest. There are several other types of canvass cards.

Under the single card system a separate canvass card is written for every elector. This enables the cards of canvassed electors to be handed back to the Committee Rooms immediately, the canvasser retaining only the uncanvassed cards. The system enables the Committee Room Clerk to sort out the Fors and Againsts and put aside the Doubtfuls and queries for separate attention. The cards of the Fors are ready and handy for fetching-up on polling day, and throughout the system works smoothly and advantageously.

It often surprises us that, in districts where alphabetic registers are used, so little attempt is made to obtain a house record of the electors. Where the single canvass card system is used a friendly postman can often work wonders by sorting out.

In country districts the "family" type of canvass card is often suitable, though it entails extra work in the Committee Rooms on polling day. The house or family card has a limited use in towns. Some electioneers write up cards for man and wife, and separate

canvass cards for lodgers and sons and daughters.

Canvass books are used in some areas, but the method is old-fashioned. Under this system two or three dozen electors are lumped together and included in one book. This system also has the objection that fetch-up cards must be written on polling day. The advantage of the single card system over all others is that work is minimised at the very time when system and speed are all-important, i.e., on polling day.

"Vote Fors" Little Good

Question. While writing I should like to know your opinion on "Vote Fors." Double crown "Vote Fors" are greatly used in our district at election times by all Parties, but we have a difficulty in keeping up with the other side owing to the cost.

Answer. By "Vote Fors" we presume our correspondent means the printed exhortation so often seen to "Vote For —." Well, we don't think anything at all to the good of these obsolete exhortations. The phrase suits old-fashioned electioneers, but posters of this kind are not worth the expenditure of Labour money.

"Vote Fors" are, of course, mostly used to obtain a "show" for one's candidate, and if everybody sticks to the same method it means that the candidate with the deepest pocket gets the best show. But the man with the biggest parsnips does not always grow the sweetest vegetables. The "show" we like is not in "Vote Fors" but in window cards, which have a meaning and a message.

We ourselves originated the fashion of dropping one word; fifteen years ago we urged electors in one election to "Vote Henderson." In the same election we went one better and labelled our election "the Henderson Election," followed by a slogan in which the candidate's name was again mentioned. The insinuation of a one-sidedness about the matter was in this case a publicity asset—it is not always—and the slogan has it every time over the old-fashioned "Vote For."

Never use "Vote For," but please always try to make a message tell by its brevity, its wit, if possible, and its directness, aptness and action. The man who does this can make his output go ten times as far.

Question. Our Party has decided not to ask the candidate to the selection meeting. Do you think this is right, and ought not our Party to have the chance of seeing the proposed candidate and asking questions of him?

Answer. This is not a question which can be solved by reference to Party rule, but Party practice certainly encourages the course of calling each nominee to a selection meeting, though the practice and the desirability is not universal.

We cannot see what advantage is to be gained by calling a candidate to a selection meeting whose views are well known; who has been before the constituency before, or, in some cases, whose non-selection is a notorious impossibility.

Circumstances differ so widely that it is impossible to lay down a general rule. It is good policy if one candidate is asked to invite the lot, and so avoid the objection that distinction was made. On the other hand, we have known a case where some of the nominees were so well known that it was decided to ask to the selection meeting only those who were less known. Not quite a safe procedure.

To Use a Car

Question. In view of our coming Council Elections we should like to know how you think a car ought to be used on polling day. Some of our members say one thing and some another, but the "L.O." is an authority on this matter and so we appeal to you.

Answer. We bow! Our friend does not give us any information which would guide us as to the best way of using a car in his case, nor indeed as to whether there is only one car or a lot of cars, which factor, of course, might alter the case.

Setting aside our own prejudices, which would prompt us to say to the Labour Movement, "Do without cars altogether," one has to remember that the use of cars on polling day is primarily to poll votes. We think that in a case where only one or two cars were available, or in circumstances where it appeared utterly hopeless to poll any substantial number of votes with a few cars available, we should endeavour to make a virtue of necessity and discard cars altogether for fetching voters. The cars then would be used for service purposes, gaily

decked, of course. After all, service cars are an absolute necessity.

Where a good and effective canvass has been made, cars can be used from quite early in the day to fetch up voters. Take first the more inaccessible parts of the polling districts, and with a band of workers exhaust all possible votes. The near at hand and the sick and infirm can wait till after this is done.

As the busy hours approach cars and workers should be concentrated where votes are to be polled in numbers and quickly. If there are works in the Division, use any lorries or vans available, and pack well. But to take one load of lucky ones from a works gate and leave all the others behind, is to do more harm than good. If Tory cars are there, and it is impossible to supply Labour vehicles, make a speech instead, or running commentary over the mike, urging workers to walk.

In strong areas it may be a waste of one's resources to consider distant voters and the sick. After all, cars are for polling votes and not for charitable purposes. The object is to win, and to hold up cars by waiting upon a few individuals is a profound error.

In these strong areas, a few workers with a car can accomplish wonders. As one car load is sent away to poll, another car load is collected, and so on throughout the whole available time.

While on this matter, let us warn our readers against the common occurrence of getting a driver, or owner, fed up by the sort of treatment and use his car receives during the day. It is an unpleasant thing to find that just when a car is needed it has run out of petrol, or broken down, or that the driver has found an excuse to go home.

ANSWERS IN BRIEF

Conduct of Elections. A reader enquires whether we can recommend the Labour Party's publication "Conduct of Elections." Our reply is yes, but as we are not aware that any new edition has been published since the Local Government Act, 1933, was passed, it is advisable to read in conjunction with the Act. At the reduced price of 2s. 6d. the book is cheap.

Gaming. Two correspondents submit to us schemes for raising money in

which the element of chance exists. We are asked to say whether these schemes are legal.

Our answer is that we must decline to risk a reply on such matters as these. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, and we shall not follow their example. Further, there is no fixed law upon this subject. Legality or illegality depends upon the view taken by the Courts, or the police in the first place, as to whether the competition is one of skill or chance.

Elections in May. A correspondent asks why it is that County Council Elections take place in March, the District Council Elections in April, the Municipal Elections in November, and a Parliamentary Election at any old time.

We give it up. There is no reason except the perversity and idiocy of British legislators. But there is a growing consensus of opinion toward changing the date of elections, so that all Local Government Elections shall take place in May. This reform was first advocated in the *Labour Organiser* some years ago.

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SAM HAGUE RECALLS

(Continued from last month)

In the General Election of 1918 we were faced on the one hand by the same Tory (Mr. Henry White) who had fought us twice previously; and by Mr. J. T. Murphy (Communist) on the other. At this time all the large workshops were in the hands of shop stewards (Communist) and, early in the campaign, appearances seemed to indicate a Communist victory. They were certainly a smart lot. Booking halls for my meetings, I soon realised they had, two weeks before polling day, secured every large hall in the constituency for the eve of the poll.

A vicious campaign of falsehood and misrepresentation was carried on. Mr. Hodge was belittled, ridiculed and lied about, and capital was made of the fact that he held Cabinet rank. He was confined to bed by septic throat, contracted through speaking for other Labour candidates, before starting his own fight. It was suggested he was shamming and daren't face the music. "If we only had a man like Ben Tillett we would be proud of him, and would not oppose him." This, and tons more like it!

Well, I hired a taxi and tracked Tillett after a lot of trouble. I represented our handicap—Hodge ill in bed and this unscrupulous villainy to meet. After an hour's pleading and reasoning, Tillett looked across, seeming inclined to come. But his Agent said, "No, Ben, you mustn't!" Tillett replied, "Dammit, Edwards, I must. Yes, Hague, old chap, I'll come; it may be late, but you can rely on me coming to speak for Hodge!"

Tillett was really ill and he came contrary to strict orders of his doctor. I put a car at his disposal for the whole of the night and assured him he need not speak long at the meeting—the principal thing I wanted was authority to advertise him as "speaking in support of Hodge." Knowing he would be our last speaker, I was anxious to have a drink for him when he would arrive. Owing to D.O.R.A. the pubs closed early, but I approached the steward at the Tory Club and induced him to let me have a bottle of whiskey and a syphon of soda, put the whiskey in my large coat pocket

and swaggered across swinging the syphon by its tap. There was great excitement in the Club, and about 30 Tory members came to hear Tillett. (They didn't know I had the whiskey, that was a secret between myself and the steward.)

Ben arrived at 10-45; he was in excellent form and spoke for an hour. I put the remainder of the whiskey in his overcoat pocket and sent him off with my heartfelt blessing. His speech was our turning point. The fact that Tillett was supporting Hodge took a lot of wind out of Murphy's sails. I still realised that the psychological effect of their big, final meetings—we relegated to small rooms in back streets—might be very great.

I visited the proprietor of our largest theatre, but he was emphatic in declaring that I could not have his theatre for the eve of the poll (Friday). I argued and persuaded; suggested terrible possibilities to himself and the monied classes generally if the Communists gained a foothold. He was adamant: "It would cost you £50 to have my theatre!" I replied: "Well, if you say £50 it is £50, but I must have your theatre." Then he declared I could not have it, even for £50. I said, "Well, if I cannot have it for £50, please name a sum at which I may have it."

Finally, he agreed to cancel his "second house" and let me have it from 8-15 until midnight. The theatre was packed to suffocation and, as the speakers finished, they came outside to address a huge open-air meeting behind the theatre. The Communists only ran three meetings, and their largest audience was 63 in a hall fitted for 1,000. Hodge scored 13,000 over Murphy, who lost his deposit, and 8,040 over the Tory.

Though ineffective in a tame, easy contest, John Hodge was an excellent candidate, and always at his best in a hard, hot fight. But he was even better "Member." His work in the House of Commons brought substantial gain to millions of workers (especially to the organised workers and Trade Unions) as well as increased pensions to Ex-Servicemen. Many thousands

injured in previous wars were included, who had never been granted pensions. Having served nearly twenty years in Parliament, he retired in 1923. Mr. Joseph Compton (Coach Makers' Union) was adopted to succeed him as candidate for Gorton, and I transferred my services to Mr. John Baker (Iron and Steel Trades Association) at Bilston, Wolverhampton. On the eve of poll I estimated we would certainly win, but learned later that all workers at the largest steelworks in the district had received a circular letter from the Manager representing that the firm had worked at a loss for several years, and would certainly close down unless they got a chance for Tariff Reform by election of the Tory candidate. The Tory won, Liberal lost his deposit, and we failed, beaten by 1,101.

Naturally, I had many interesting, often amusing, experiences in local fights, as well as parliamentary.

During our campaign on behalf of Geo. F. Titt in 1910, after a huge meeting at a works' gate in the dinner hour, a working man remarked, "It's all very well for George Titt trying to get on the Council, and he has a damned cheek to expect it." I said, "You are quite right, young man; Titt is all right for leading in your wage troubles, taking hard knocks on your behalf, going to jail for withstanding police when they interfere with your pickets. But if there is any honour or limelight, let your boss, or landlord, or the publican have it." To the shame of the workers in the typical working-class Ward of Openshaw, our Tory opponent (Caminada, ex-chief detective) drew a level vote with George Titt, and Titt was elected by casting vote of the Tory Alderman (acting Returning Officer) as a mark of censure on Caminada for disgraceful conduct at a previous Council meeting.

At another time, Councillor Higginson, because of his growing family, moved from a 6s. 6d. house to one at 9s. 3d. It was common talk among the workers that he had gone to live in a b—— mansion since he had got on the Council. Later, having lost my wife by death, I decided to try the experience of living in a low slum for a year or so. Same type of workers said, "There's Sam Hague, too b—— mean to pay a decent rent." ("Like children in the market, we have piped and ye would not dance; played funerals and ye would not weep.")

At a by-election, January, 1919, we adopted Joe Toole as the candidate for Openshaw. Owing to his youthful appearance, the Tory canvassers diligently represented he was little more than a schoolboy, no experience or initiative, and scandalous to think of putting him on the City Council. Knowing Toole would not return home before his public meeting, I went up to his house, told Mrs. Toole that Joe wanted her and the children at the meeting, she must prepare them and I would come with a car to take them over. No one in the meeting was more surprised than Joe Toole to see his wife and children troop on to the platform, where I introduced them as "the schoolboy's wife and family."

For many years now the Gorton Parliamentary Division has enjoyed 100 per cent. Labour representation, both local and national.

And the enemy have adopted all sorts of labels: Liberal, Conservative, Independent, Ratepayers' Association, People's Party, Catholic Party, New Centre Party, in the hope of breaking our strength.

Sam Hague writes:

"Dear 'Jack Cutter,'—your mention of Holland with Boston's trip to Blackpool moves me to inform you that the Colman Ward (Hull) Labour Party have come to Blackpool three years in succession; and they are coming again this year, in October. Three years ago Councillor Body asked me to arrange a tea and motor coach tour of the Illuminations for him. The party would be about 40. But the party grew as days went by, and reached a total of 183. In 1934 the party was 276; and, last year, 454. Enclosed letter (which please return) gives some testimony of satisfaction. Inferentially one can gather that the standing of the Labour Party was also enhanced by the outing. Anyway, it seems to have become something approaching an annual institution so far as Colman Ward is concerned. I am in full agreement with your suggestion that a good deal more might be done, on such lines, with benefit to all concerned. Every good wish."

Mr. Hague's address, by the way, is 22, Madison Avenue, Bispham, Blackpool.

START THAT LABOUR LOCAL PAPER NOW.

By Wilfrid B. Hargreaves
(Secretary Royton Div. L.P.)

Labour Parties in many parts of England own and run successful news-sheets, which are a tower of strength to the Parties concerned. Many more Parties could, with advantage, follow suit.

Steady effort, along the right lines can establish and maintain a successful journal, which will not only yield fruit to the propaganda account, but will help financially by showing a net profit regularly.

There are four things which must be granted. An experienced Secretary or Agent to solicit adverts. CONSISTENTLY (big print, please, Mr. Printer). A level-headed member of the Party to act as Editor. Some unpaid help for a few months in delivery of the paper. A telephone.

Given these, success is certain in a few months.

What should the Party without newspaper do?

First, decide on a convenient size, with reference to propaganda matter, advert. revenue space, weight of paper and size of delivery, and to possible use of ready set up, partly prepared news-sheets, or masses of type ready set up in columns (stereos, electros and the like).

The *Royton Division Standard*, which is run smoothly from our Party office, is normally double crown, that is, 20in. by 30in., when opened flat. This makes four pages 20in. by 15in., two on each side. This month (October) we have advanced to six pages, 20in. by 15in. There are six columns to a page.

An advert. revenue of approximately £20 for the four-page paper was, and a revenue of approximately £31 for the six-page paper is, secured. Printing, delivery and overhead costs were and are £17 10s. od. and £25 10s. od. respectively.

Income is not yet sufficient, for no attempt to provide a development or reserve fund has been made up to date.

Having settled the size and worked out advert. charges to yield a fair profit, the next step is to secure advert. revenue. This needs determined, steady effort. On the success of this

everything else depends. There are certain practical aids which go a long way to achieving success.

Imitation newspapers or dummies can be obtained from the printer, made up to indicate the appearance of the proposed paper. Settle the name of the paper at once. The shorter and more euphonious the better.

A courteous letter, giving the figures of circulation, districts covered, printing and publishing days, advert. costs in detail, and offering every help, should be sent to every tradesman and business which advertises in any way, in the locality concerned.

The letter should state who is responsible for advertising, who is the Editor, who is the proprietor, telephone number, hours of business, etc.

Write to the prospective advertiser in terms of people: i.e., if the circulation is 12,000, talk about 50,000 readers, which is approximately correct. Stick to the rates worked out. Make a suitable deduction for three, six or twelve months' advertising. Cut out adverts. from other local papers, paste them on similar spaces in the proposed paper, and send them along to the traders concerned, with your advert. charges for those spaces.

Far better than cutting advertisement rates is to offer a write-up. This is a brief puff of the trader's wares or offers, from time to time. A nice write-up often induces a trader to advertise.

Steadily circularise with repeated changes of letter, and follow up the circulars regularly, in the mornings as far as possible. An intelligent use of the telephone sorts out the ones likely to advertise from those not yet "in the market." If a trader is advertising at all, he is a prospect sooner or later. Tell the trader emphatically and confidently that he is missing business by not advertising. Emphasise the fact that 50,000 people in the near district read it. Weigh regularly on his back and ultimately you'll get him. Let him have the paper regularly whether he advertises or not.

No trader likes to think of large numbers of people not getting any message from him, while possibly getting that of his competitors. Sometimes a gentle hint that his competitors are finding the paper useful will bring him. The writer, after six months, was sent for by one large furniture firm who had seen a competitor's advert. He came out with a long contract in his possession from a manager he had

never before seen, but who had been reading the Labour paper which he had regularly received.

The writer is, possibly, an experienced publicity man. But he has colleagues in other Parties near who are not, but who run successful Labour papers. No special skill is required—there's no luck—it's just steady effort along well-known lines such as those indicated which brings success.

Delivery of the paper is not difficult to arrange. Get the advert. revenue fixed up first, in good time, and ensure publication. Well before publication date, call a conference of the rank and file. It goes without saying that some good chap such as the *Herald* man, the Head Office Divisional Organiser, the parliamentary candidate or Member, or the like, should be pressed into service. There's sure to be a good turn up to hear all about the local paper.

Get down to it at once, and let the rank and file talk about it. At the right time, bring up the question of delivery, and ask Wards or Local Parties to undertake it for a few months.

In four or five months the paper will be in a position to make a partial payment for delivery. If Wards or Local Parties are allowed to choose their own man or men for delivery they will supplement a partial payment from the paper with a little from themselves. We in Royton Division are in that stage now, and have no difficulty in the delivery of 12,000 papers monthly. In December we shall issue an extra copy, making two in that month. We shall have no difficulty even then. Arthur Greenwood urged this payment course upon us. Events have proved him right.

The control of a Labour paper is not difficult. The Party Secretary should not be Editor; his job should be the securing of adverts. The writer was for four or five months Editor and advert. canvasser. Both jobs cannot be done for long even by an experienced man. For Editor a responsible member of the Party should be selected. He can invite contributions from other members, Trade Union officials, Ward and Party Secretaries, and the like.

The *Herald*, the T.U.C., the Labour Party press service, Trade Union magazines, and other sources give free professional aid in bulletins, news, etc.

This help is invaluable, and gives even an amateur paper a backbone of professional writing which is attractive and effective.

Our difficulty is not securing enough matter, but in finding space. At the monthly meeting of the Party Executive, a financial and other report is given relative to the paper. Questions, suggestions and even criticism are welcomed at that meeting. The Editor, a member of the Executive, deals with any matter raised. Control is thus exercised in a direct and efficient manner, in little time. The Executive lays down policy, but allows the Editor to decide what shall and shall not be accepted. In short, it allows him to "edit," and supports him steadily.

Perhaps a suggestion or two on the lay-out and appearance of a news-sheet may help.

Short paragraphs and frequent headings give a "newsy" effect. The long article can be made more attractive by a photo of the writer, bold splash heading across two or more columns, and plenty of sub-headings.

Photos of candidates, officers of the Party, active workers in the Party, and others should be frequently used. Small blocks are best. If the photo is changed from time to time, it is all to the good. Bold headlines, with secondary heads in smaller type, give a news effect simply and easily. A brief study of the *Herald's* pages and headings is very informative, and shows one what to do.

We in Royston are fortunate in having an Editor with a long Party experience. He does not pretend to be a newspaper man, or even an expert in English. He does know, however, what the Labour policy is, leans neither to right nor left, uses the matter sent him by the *Herald*, the T.U.C., the Party press service, the Trade Unions, and others.

He gives the Local Parties a fair show, sees that solid propaganda is put across regularly, and steadily cross-examines, criticises, and at times ridicules the local Tory Member. He is, too, usually most reasonable in allowing the advertising representative as much space as possible for "write-ups."

We are some distance yet from giving the local Tory M.P. notice to quit. But he is being steadily undermined, exposed for the poor knowledge of cur-

rent politics which he has, and is being constantly asked for his views on this, that and the other. In the not distant future he will be unseated. When that time arrives and that event occurs a Labour M.P. will take his place. The *Royton Division Standard* will have done much to bring it about.

That is one good reason for that paper's existence. Similar reasons exist in your constituency, good reader. Go, then, and do likewise!

AGENCY CHANGES— ADDITIONS

LONDON: Kensington.—Mr. W. H. Hunt, 108, Clapham Rd., London, S.W.9.;

Wandsworth Central.—Mr. A. J. Herbert, c/o Wandsworth Central L.P., 115, St. James Rd., London, S.W.17.;

Tottenham North.—Mr. E. Furness, 7, Bruce Grove, Tottenham, London, N.17.

YORKS.: Sheffield (Attercliffe).—Mr. H. Jackson, 314, Attercliffe Common, Sheffield 9, Yorks.

Propaganda, to be really successful, should be constant and continuous as well as aggressive. We do not believe the best results are obtained by fits and starts, or casual meetings. There ought to be no important district in the country without at least one regular weekly meeting for propagandist purpose. Nor need these be camouflaged under the name of Labour Churches, etc. It has long been discovered the latter type of meeting tends to become academic and to be attended principally by the converted. Propaganda meetings should have the drive of the Party's power behind them, and a good part of its organising energy should be put into them. It is in this way that live parties can be built up and the material found for organising victory. In this matter it is as well not to forget the young. Special meetings for young people are as yet a novelty in Labour propaganda. There is plenty of room for Local Parties to distinguish their efforts by a spice of novelty and originality in this direction. While we are waiting for some of the old stick-in-the-muds to die we might as well seek after the younger generation!

[From "L.O." for August, 1923.]

A BIRMINGHAM PEACE PLAN

THE danger of a Second World War becomes obviously greater with every day that passes.

The League of Nations is palpably failing to maintain peace, and governments are reverting to the old policy of "preparedness" which must be the prelude to a shattering conflict.

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LABOUR PARTY DIRECTORY

KEY TO INDEX LETTERS REPRESENTING LABOUR PARTY ORGANISING DISTRICTS.

A	North-Eastern District	F	South-Western District
B	North-Western District	G	Eastern District
C	Midlands District	H	Wales
D	Southern and Home Counties District	J	Scotland
E	London District	K	Universities

KEY TO NATURE OF CONSTITUENCY.

(CD)	County Divisions	(DB)	Divisional Boroughs
(SB)	Single-membered Boroughs	(BD)	Borough Divisions
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CORRECTIONS RECEIVED SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE

<i>Index</i>	<i>Descrip-</i>	<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Present Secretary and Address</i>
D5	CD	Abingdon D.L.P.	Mrs. L. M. C. LOCKHART, Pye Barn, Mouldsford, Wallingford, Berks.
G90	CD	Colchester D.L.P.	Mr. W. CHAPPELL, Labour Party Office, St. Botolph's House, Colchester, Essex.
B186	SB	Warrington T.C. & L.P.	Coun. G. HINDLE, 52, Church St., Warrington, Lancs.
E227	BD	Bethnal Green (S.W.) D.L.P.	Mr. M. BASS, 293, Cambridge Rd., Bethnal Green, London, E.2.
E253	BD	Kennington D.L.P.	Mr. W. H. HUNT, Kennington Labour Party, 108, Clapham Rd., London, S.W.9.
E255	BD	Norwood D.L.P.	Mrs. G. B. DALTON, 5, Bradley Rd., Crown Hill, London, S.E.19.
D283	SB	Ealing L.P. & T.C.	Miss I. M. DUNSTALL, 47, Claygate Rd., West Ealing, London, W.13.
G303	CD	King's Lynn D.L.P.	The SECRETARY, King's Lynn Divisional L.P., Labour Club, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk.
F340	CD	Frome D.L.P.	Mr. D. T. STONE, 16, Radstock Rd., Midsomer Norton, Bath, Somerset.
C398	BD	Moseley D.L.P.	Mr. C. DOLPHIN, 67, Fox Hollies Rd., Acock's Green, Birmingham.
A442	BD	Sheffield (Central) D.L.P.	Mr. A. PASHLEY, Leslie's Chambers, Market Place, Sheffield 1, Yorks.
A452	CD	Cleveland D.L.P.	The SECRETARY, 27, Ruby St., Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks.
J569	CD	Orkney & Shetland D.L.P.	Mr. W. GROUNDWATER, Hamnavoe, Bignold Park Rd., Kirkwall, Orkney.

ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES ENDORSED

2nd OCTOBER, 1936

LANCS: Stretford.—Mr. Will Nally, Dovedale, Nettleton Grove, Blackley, Manchester.

LONDON: East Fulham.—Mr. R. Michael M. Stewart, 24, Winn Rd., S.E.12.

YORKS.: Bradford North.—Mrs. M. Wallhead Nicol, 8, Elmwood, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

Skipton.—Mr. J. Percival Davies, "Sandway," 174, North Drive, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancs.

SCOTLAND.

ABERDEEN EAST.—Mr. Fred Martin, St. Dunstan's, Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire.

BERWICK AND HADDINGTON.—Mr. J. J. Fraser, 5, Jackson Street, Blantyre, Lanarkshire.

MIDLOTHIAN: Edinburgh Central.—Mr. Andrew Gilzean, 4, Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh;
Edinburgh North.—Mr. G. W. Crawford, 21, Windsor Street, Edinburgh.

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PELAW	-	COUNTY DURHAM
ELGAR ROAD	-	READING

ABOUT SELECTION MEETINGS

I have recently been engaged in the more or less profitable task of studying the psychology of our movement as displayed as selection conferences; and the result is not comforting. Quite frankly, our movement does not show up at its best at meetings for the selection of candidates, and this is the case more especially when Trade Union candidates come forward backed by the finances of their Union. One of the great democratic objections to the procedure of the other parties in relation to the selection of a candidate has been the fact that no real choice of a democratic nature takes place, but that a bigwig is put forward by some secret caucus whose action has been chiefly prompted by the bulginess of his money-bags. And they who pay the piper call the tune. In other parties their following meekly accepted this sort of thing, and directly a man was put forward who possessed the requisite funds everybody began to discover in him all the virtues which go to make up the ideal candidate.

Now this sort of thing is by no means dead; it is alive yet in our own Party, and it constitutes a danger. On many occasions I have sat in selection meetings, and before a candidate has ever uttered a single word upon his views, his financial backing having been known, speakers have got up appraising his value and expressing the same old sentiments regarding the nominee's suitability, as they might have done if some country magnate had come forward in the older parties prepared to foot the bill. I sometimes wonder whether the same virtues would be discovered if the money had to be discovered locally. It is not quite good enough to accept a candidate purely because of his financial backing, and in a critical movement such as ours troubles come afterwards and in plenty. I have vividly in mind one County Division noted in one area for its advanced thought and aggressive politics. After much seeking, a candidate was found who possessed ample funds and who duly appeared before a selection meeting. He made a speech that might have done him credit in the secluded and unctuous circles of a young Liberal League, but which displayed his utter ignorance of the fundamentals of the Labour creed; yet

he was accepted with a gulp, after but one question upon his views—the answer to which, by-the-bye, was wholly at variance with Party policy. Perhaps they felt relief that the Party was freed from much of its financial worries, so were less critical that day, for he was afterwards hailed by most of those present as a heaven-sent evangelist for capturing that seat! This didn't come off, for within three months there was trouble. The matter dragged for twelve months, by which time the candidate had spent a good deal of money in the Division, and then the sequel came in an official request from the Divisional Party that the candidate should retire, he being found "unsuitable." Chairmen of meetings for the selection of candidates have a considerable responsibility, and they should see to it that while nominees are not subjected to school-boy examinations in the elementary principles of Labour's policy, they nevertheless explain themselves sufficiently to secure that there is no misunderstanding where they stand. In all cases it is infinitely better that a Division shall have some opportunity of getting acquainted with an unknown before swallowing him and his principles whole at one crowded meeting.

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